

NOAA Climate Service Press Call

Moderator: Christopher Vaccaro

February 8, 2010

10:00 am EST

Coordinator: Good morning and thank you for standing by. At this time all participants are in a listen only mode until the question and answer portion of the conference. During that time if you would like to ask a question, please press star 1 on your phone. You will be prompted to record your first and last name. To withdraw your request, press star 2.

I'd like to remind all parties this conference is being recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect at this time.

And I would now like to turn the call over to your host today, Mr. Justin Kenney. Sir, you may begin.

Justin Kenney: Thank you (Stacey) and thank you everyone for joining us this morning. My name is Justin Kenney, Director of Communications and external affairs at NOAA.

I'm pleased to be joined with morning with - by Commerce Secretary, Gary Locke and NOAA Administrator, Dr. Jane Lubchenco for this important climate change announcement.

Also joining us on the phone to help field any questions you may have is Tom Karl and (Ted) O'Lenic from the - from NOAA.

Before I turn the call over to Secretary Locke and Dr. Lubchenco let me just do a little bit of housekeeping please. All of the materials discussed today are available online at www.noaa.gov/climate. This includes the press release for March from this morning, a video presentation prepared by Secretary Locke and Dr. Lubchenco for NOAA and the public, a long list of testimonials from leaders in business, government, environment and science, a proposed organization chart and Q&A.

And later, probably in a couple of hours, we will also post the MP3 file from this morning's call. Again, that Web site is www.noaa.gov/climate.

And finally you may contact me throughout the day either at email, that's justin.kenney@noaa.gov. Kenney is spelled K-E-N-N-E-Y - justin.kenney@noaa.gov, or on my cell phone at 202-821-6310.

And with that I would like to turn the call over to Secretary Locke who will be followed by Dr. Lubchenco. And at that point, the operator will come back on and give us instructions for the Q&A portion of this press conference.

With that, I'd like to introduce Commerce Secretary, Gary Locke.

Gary Locke: Well thank you very much Justin. It's really a pleasure to be on the phone and also with Dr. Jane Lubchenco, head of NOAA. The Department of Commerce's NOAA, it's National Weather Service I think have been on a lot of people's minds these past several days, everybody constantly checking the weather reports to see if we've finally see the last of the snow, and I guess not.

But thanks to the National Weather Service, families, businesses and the government, we're able to plan for the storm. Schools and businesses closed early and many people worked from home, and by the looks of the lines on the television news and personal experience, myself, I think everyone was able to stock up on groceries and a lot of sports fans were able to get all the stuff that they needed to watch the Super Bowl last night.

So it's my pleasure to be here with Dr. Lubchenco to announce a plan to make NOAA's existing weather programs even better. In a few moments Dr. Lubchenco will describe the details of NOAA's new client services which will result from reorganization existing programs.

But let me just spend a couple of minutes explaining why this is going to be such an important part of Commerce Department's overall mission to help boost the American economy and create new sustainable American jobs.

Whether we like it or not, climate change represents a real threat to the world's health, our prosperity and our productivity. And President Obama has already done more than any president in history to mitigate climate change.

He has included some \$80 billion for developing clean energy which is part of the Recovery Act passed by the congress a year ago. The President's 2011 budget has significant tax incentives and credits to spur energy innovation. And in Copenhagen last December, President Obama pledged a 17% reduction of our greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 over our 2005 levels and an 83% reduction by the year 2050.

These steps are unprecedented but they represent just the beginning because even with our best efforts we know that some degree of climate change is inevitable and American citizens, American businesses, American governments, from local to state to the federal government and even American non-profits must be able to rise to the economic and environmental challenges that lie ahead.

And that's where NOAA's Climate Service will prove absolutely invaluable. Every year NOAA responds to millions of requests for climate information, critical to private and public sector, planning and operations whether it's fisheries and farmers getting the information about water levels and rainfalls so they can plan ahead. Airlines and cargo ships and billion dollar weather service industry all use NOAA forecasting.

And as part of NOAA's launch of our climate services, I'm pleased to officially announce NOAA's climate portal, a dynamic new resource that will track a vast range of climate information from NOAA and other organizations.

And that's up and running today - www.climate.gov. We're launching it officially today - www.climate.gov. This is going to be a great complement to the proposed climate office because it will provide a single point of entry to a world of climate information, data, products and services. And it's an important first step for making the rich scope of NOAA's data and information available in one easy to use resource.

And that's important, because NOAA is a top notch weather forecaster. It's information is already relied on all across the world, for instance, in West Africa the Red Cross has partnered with NOAA and uses NOAA's modeling to better predict heavy rainfall and as a result the Red Cross is able to preemptively send extra food, water, blankets and tents to people where they're needed.

But by introducing the climate service now, we're acting to get ahead of the demand curve that's already been growing. It's been growing for years and years and years and will only continue to grow in the future.

This climate service office will now be a single point of contact like a one stop shop for businesses and local governments who need NOAA's high quality forecasting and modeling projections to help them make critical strategic decisions.

We have the weather service that's able to make information and predictions in the short range. Now we need a climate service that can really bring to bear all the climate data information research that we have within NOAA to really focus on the long range impact of climate change. Because increasingly climate change is affecting everybody's bottom line, and knowing if our region is likely to face rising sea levels or more severe snowstorms or just at what elevation snow will fall, all this information will be critical to businesses and the communities.

Among other things, NOAA's Climate Service will help guide companies multi-billion dollar infrastructure decisions. It's going to help municipalities figure out what investments they need to support their populations and it will enable health care providers to better predict outbreaks of disease.

Importantly, we're counting on our current employees to make this plan work and I know we have on the line Dan Sobien who's the President of the National Weather Service Employee's Organization. They're doing a terrific job and are very supportive of this reorganization.

We also anticipate the new office to spur private sector development and create jobs. For instance, a brand new private sector industry could emerge around the information generated by this new office, much like the creation of the private sector weather industry did around NOAA's national weather service or like the countless private sector marketers, forecasters and demographers that have relied on the Census Bureau data and developed so many products and services.

NOAA's Climate Service will also help accelerate the development of emerging industries like clean energy. Take wind power, today Texas leads the nation in energy

drive from wind power and Western states show some of the best potential for wind farms, but as our climate changes, wind patterns could be altered as well.

So being able to predict accurately how this will occur could have tremendous impact on energy companies, especially in the wind sector and they're going to be looking to NOAA's Climate Service for their peerless mapping on wind speed, variability and energy potential.

The bottom line is this, the better climate information that alternative energy companies have, the more profitable they can be, the more jobs they can create and the more they can actually meet the energy demands and - of our country and indeed, the world.

By providing critical planning information that our businesses and our communities need, NOAA's Climate Service will help tackle head on the challenges of mitigating and adapting to climate change. And in the process I'm sure we're going to discover new technologies, build new businesses and create new jobs.

I'm just so excited that NOAA is bringing to bare all the different resources that we now have and with this climate office, we'll also be able to better coordinate and develop future information that policyholders, the private and public sector will need to enable them to adjust and cope with and respond to the changing climate.

And so we're very, very excited that the great scientists and the great staff at NOAA are taking this on and the person who's heading up that organization is Dr. Jane Lubchenco and I'm going to turn to her now for her comments.

Jane Lubchenco: Thanks Secretary Locke. I very much appreciate your leadership in addressing the climate change challenge that our nation is facing, and thanks everybody for joining us by phone today.

I'd like to recognize three others that are on the line for this event - Tom Karl, director of NOAA's national climatic data center, Ed O'Lenic, operations branch chief at NOAA's climate prediction center, and Dan Sobien, President of the National Weather Service Employee's Organization.

The Secretary and I are making one big announcement today amplified by three related announcements. And the Secretary has foreshadowed these but I'd like to make a brief - few brief opening remarks.

The Obama Administration as the Secretary has indicated recognizes that climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing our nation. How we face this challenge, how effectively we tackle the public health, economic, environmental and security threats it poses, and how well we embrace the economic opportunities it affords will shape our lives and our legacy for our children and all future generations.

NOAA's proposed new climate office is a major step in the critically needed new direction. Information to guide decisions is essential for success and NOAA is one of the nation's most trusted providers of information about climate change.

We called this press conference to announce NOAA's intent to establish a new office called the NOAA Climate Service. This would create a single office for climate science and service bringing together the climate assets and capabilities that are currently dispersed in multiple units across the agency.

Just as our nation depends on the National Weather Service to protect lives and property as the Secretary just reminded us, so too would NOAA's Climate Service be an invaluable contribution to the nation's prosperity.

I'm pleased to note the National Weather Service traces its roots back 140 years. The proposed NOAA Climate Service would mark the birth of a new service, one focused on climate.

There is no question about the critical need for this service. Climate change is real, it's happening now in our own backyards and around the globe, and it's beginning to touch nearly every aspect of our lives.

The signs of climate change are apparent in every region of the United States and throughout the world - sea level rise, longer growing seasons, earlier snow melts, shifts in river flows, increases in heavy downpours, more intense droughts, more extreme weather events, extended ice free seasons in our waters.

The fact that these trends are mixed in with natural climate variability makes it even more important for citizens and leaders to have access to understandable, reliable and credible information about patterns and likely future conditions.

Decision makers at all levels are asking how best to prepare for these changes. NOAA already responds to millions of requests for climate information critical to planning and operations.

We fully expect requests for information to continue to grow explosively. For example, the wind powered industries need baseline data and future projections to plan for wind energy development and ensure return on investment.

Coastal communities count on NOAA Climate Services for planning and decision making as they face sea level rise and increased coastal erosion. Fishermen and fishery managers seek insight into likely shifts in patterns of distribution of fish.

Farmers need regional long term climate forecasts to help determine when they should plant and what they should grow. And public health officials need projections of changing temperature and precipitation patterns to prepare for and possibly avert disease outbreaks.

To stay on the cutting edge of climate science and service and keep pace with fast accelerating user demands, NOAA too much adapt to a changing nation and a changing world.

A NOAA Climate Service would bring together longstanding NOAA capabilities which include extensive research, observations, predictions and assessment capabilities as well as outreach, training and vital on the ground services delivery infrastructure.

By coordinating all of these climate activities more closely the NOAA Climate Service will enable us to better address fast accelerating needs across all of central sectors.

We are announcing the intent to reorganize existing assets to make NOAA's Climate Services more responsive to the needs of those who use our services. While

additional funds will be needed to increase NOAA's core climate capabilities going forward to meet growing demands, the proposed reorganization is independent of new resources.

A second announcement is that Tom Karl, Director of NOAA's National Climatic Data Center will serve as transitional director of the NOAA Climate Service. As a world class scientist and respected communicator, Tom has provided key leadership in the design of this reorganization. We greatly appreciate his willingness to at the helm of the transition.

Our third announcement is the creation of six new NOAA regional climate services director positions. These individuals will provide coordinated leadership on the ground in developing an integrated regional climate services program.

The depiction of the NOAA reorganization and a few other graphics relative to this announcement can be found at www.noaa.gov.

In brief, the building blocks of the new NOAA climate service will be drawn from three existing NOAA line offices - NOAA's Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, the Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory, the Climate Program Office, and from the Earth System Research Laboratory, the Chemical Sciences Division, the Global Monitoring Division and the Physical Sciences Division.

The second line office involved is the National Environmental Satellite Data and Information Service. The three data centers - the National Climatic Data Center that Tom Karl leads, the National Oceanographic Data Center and the National Geophysical Data Center, as well as the comprehensive larger (rate) Stewardship System Program Office will be part of this new NOAA Climate Service.

And finally, the Climate Service Office will assume management of the relevant climate networks from the National Weather Service including the tropical atmosphere ocean array, an historical climate network and the modernization of the hourly precipitation gauges.

Planning for the reorganization has been shaped and continues to be informed by NOAA employees and very helpful input from other federal agencies and stakeholders throughout the country. Recommendations and advice from the Miller Science Advisory Board, the National Academy and NOAA's regional and academic partners has been invaluable.

We are fully aware of and committed to fulfilling all labor relations obligations associated with the creation and operation of the NOAA Climate Service and we greatly appreciate the assistance of the National Weather Service Employee's Organization leadership as we move ahead.

Working closely with many federal, regional, academic and other partners, we also continue to transform science and data into practical timely and easily acceptable information.

As Secretary Locke mentioned, the NOAA Climate Service would be a valuable resource for industry, business, local governments and virtually all sectors of society.

The proposed reorganization would retain the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research recognizing the unique importance of a dedicated science and research enterprise within NOAA.

This research office served as the incubator for much of the science and discovery that helped open the eyes of the world to the risks of greenhouse gas emissions, climate change and ocean (certification), all considered essential to retain this line office and enable to incubate new science that is relevant to NOAA's mission.

And regardless of where science is within NOAA, strengthening it is a priority. And as the Secretary has indicated, our fourth and final announcement of today is the unveiling of the NOAA climate portal at www.climate.gov.

This is a dynamic new Web resource that provides a vast range of new and compelling climate information from NOAA and other organizations. This portal is a great compliment to the proposed climate office because it provides a single point of entry to a world of climate information, data, products and services.

This portal is the first step toward making a rich scope of NOAA's data and information available in one easy to use resource. On the portal you'll find an innovative online magazine called, "Climate Watch," that contains articles, images and videos about various climate issues, a range of constantly updating climate data sets for various time periods, information about NOAA's and other agency's data and products and easily understood presentations about climate science and it's impacts and much more.

In summary, we are announcing the intent to create a new (mila) climate service to be led initially by Dr. Tom Karl, the creation of six regional climate services directors and a new Web portal at climate.gov.

These actions serve to reinforce our commitment to work with other federal agencies and academic partners to provide timely and reliable information about our changing world.

NOAA's proposed new climate office is a major step in a critically needed new direction.
Thank you.

Justin Kenney: Thank you Secretary Locke and thank you Dr. Lubchenco. At this point I'd like to turn it back over to our conference call leader, (Stacey) to tell us how we do the Q&A portion.

Coordinator: Thank you sir. At this time if you would like to ask a question, please press star 1 on your phone. You will be prompted to record your first and last name. To withdraw your request, press star 2. Once again, to ask a question, please press star 1.

Your first question today comes from (Seth Borenstein) of the Associated Press.

(Seth Borenstein): Thank you for doing this. It's (Seth Borenstein) from the AP. This is somewhat sim- you know, obviously it's not the same as the inter-governmental panel and climate change and thus my somewhat unrelated question.

You know, IPCC's reports lately have been under criticism from the Himalayan glaciers to the Amazon numbers and there are some who say this shows there are some major problems there. Others are saying these are minor things.

I'm wondering if Dr. Lubchenco and Dr. Karl, if you can address this and is this in any way a response to the problem the IPCC is and how does NOAA see - what's NOAA's position on the problems IPCC has been having as of late?

Jane Lubchenco: (Seth), this is Jane Lubchenco. Thanks for the question. I think I would begin by noting that NOAA is committed to openness and transparency and making all of the data that it collects freely available and accessible. And to that end, the new climate portal that we are announcing should make it even easier for people to access and be able to examine for themselves the information that goes into various assessments.

I think it's important to note that the science that is continually evolving is important to stay on top of and mechanisms like the NOAA Climate Service will make it easier for us to have a mechanism for doing exactly that.

Tom Karl, would you like to add anything to what I've already articulated?

Tom Karl: Sure. Thank you very much. (Seth), one of the things that I think is important to understand is that the need for climate services has, as Secretary Locke, has identified been evolving for a number of years now, in particular, important questions are being posed from various segments of society whether they are engineers, whether it's the energy development area, whether it's landscape architects, all the way from construction contractors in terms of how they could best plan and live with a changing and varying climate.

And so this activity that we're intending to pursue, that is, the climate service is really driven in a large measure by the need for information from many of these sectors.

That does not discount in any shape or manner the importance of activities like international assessments and national assessments. And our new service will be able to provide the best information possible, the best science so that those assessments can be of most value.

(Seth Borenstein): But I guess that doesn't - that doesn't answer the question, are you still comfortable with the IPCC process? Are you comfortable with the IPCC documents?

Jane Lubchenco: The IPCC process is a very rigorous process that has produced a wealth of very credible information about climate change. It's not a (fixed) process and I think recent events have highlighted a couple of areas where it can be improved, but by and large, the vast majority of what's in the IPCC is very strong. It's very credible.

And the process I think is one that has been honed (two) times and by and large works very well.

Tom Karl: And I would just add that the fundamental science that the assessment process has delivered and improved in terms of the way we look at the data, the way we look at the models and observations have been of tremendous benefit.

The science itself is sound and solid. And I think we have the utmost confidence in the science behind the IPCC process and our own national assessments.

Coordinator: Thank you. Your next question comes from (Lauren Morello) of Climate Wire.

(Lauren Morello): Hi. I just wanted to ask since you've been very careful to note that this is an announcement of an intent to create a climate service, are you - I mean I know that Dr. Lubchenco has talked about the authority NOAA has under several laws to provide climate services. So are you looking to have this included in legislation or - I guess, why are you talking about an intent today and not an actual creation?

Gary Locke: This is Gary Locke. We need to have approval under - for any reorganization by the appropriating committees of the House and the Senate. So this is launching that process and of course we need to work with our labor organizations as well as OMB to show exactly which people will be reporting to which - and in what way to this climate service.

But ultimately we need to have approval by the congress, not through legislation but through their committees before this type of reorganization. But in the

meantime we're launching today climate - the climate portal which is up and running and we'll still be bringing together all the capabilities and the resources of all the various groups and employees and functions within NOAA as they pertain to climate services.

(Lauren Morello): Can I quickly follow up then? Is it your intent to have this in place by the beginning of the fiscal '11 budget year?

Gary Locke: Yes.

(Lauren Morello): Okay.

Coordinator: Thank you. Your next question comes from (Margaret Ryan) of Clear Skies News.

(Margaret Ryan): Thank you so much as (unintelligible) (got his news). I wondered in light of the answer that Secretary Locke just gave, could you tell me, first, just a detailed question, what actually do you need from the appropriations committee? Do you need an actual vote or do you need them simply not to veto it?

And what - so in light of all you've just said, what objections do you anticipate here? If you're reorganizing is there something you're stopping doing that you think members of the appropriations committees are going to say, "No, we don't want you to do that?"

Gary Locke: Well just as we have - this is Secretary Locke again. It does not require formal legislation but we do need to have the concurrence of the appropriators on the House and the Senate because ultimately it will require movement from - of some of the funds that go to various agencies within NOAA to the new climate services office.

And for instance, NOAA had a recent reorganization and that's been approved by the appropriators as well, so this is like any other government reorganization that needs approval from the congress. It does not have to be a new law that's passed by the congress.

Jane Lubchenco: This is Jane Lubchenco. Let me just add quickly that the process is a pretty straightforward one in that it (follows) NOAA's need to articulate to exactly which offices will be affected, what the changes are, who's involved, and what the dollar flow from one line office to another line office.

We proposed that to the Department of Commerce. Once they have agreed that this is the right set of steps, it goes to the Office of Management and Budget and then in turn to the Congress.

So this is, again, a fairly routine reorganization that is - requires a number of steps to come to completion.

Coordinator: Thank you. Your next question comes from (Suzanne Goldenberg) of Guardian.

(Suzanne Goldenberg): Hello. Thank you for taking this call. I wanted to (double) up on the first question and that is to sort of ask not about the body of science being (sent) but perception surrounding the science. Is - do you see part of NOAA's mission here that our need for NOAA to take on this mission activities that will make the public more confident about the science on climate change and increase public perceptions about the credibility of the science on climate change given the recent controversies over the email?

Jane Lubchenco: This is Jane Lubchenco. Let me start and then invite anyone else - Tom or Mr. Secretary to jump in if you wish.

I think it's very important for people to know what is known and how it's known. And NOAA's commitment to explaining those elements I think has been in existence for some time and we are reinforcing its importance.

To be able to simply articulate and show what the data show and what we can - what the patterns are, I think will go a very long way toward helping the public and decision makers understand what is known.

But more importantly, as Mr. Secretary and Tom have pointed out, many, many people are coming to NOAA already. We get millions of requests each year saying, "Help us plan for the type of waters. Make it - help us make decisions as we're

managing - as we're thinking about managing water for the next couple of decades for our city. What can we expect by way of precipitation?"

So it is I think useful to note that we are already getting lots and lots of requests and this reorganization will help us do a better job of providing information to people so they can use that to make their decisions.

(Suzanne Goldenberg): But do you think that further action needs to be taken to make the people feel more that they can trust that information given the failings of the IPCC process given details that have emerged about how sciences have behaved, you know, in the email, in the hacked email?

Jane Lubchenco: Having the information readily available and understandable and having trusted sources as providers of that information I think is critically important and we are committed to doing that.

Gary Locke: This is Gary Locke. I - and you know, of course we have a 140 year history of the National Weather Service which is a highly respected professional organization and one that's looked to from people all around the world. And we want to build on that credibility and that expertise.

And let me just say that NOAA, for several years, has been the repository of some of the world's largest collection of data of climate change going back studying this affect of climate change over millions of years. We have that information that the scientists have analyzed and put together.

So we're the repository of some of the - basically the world's largest library or collection of data with respect to climate change. So we're building upon that expertise.

And furthermore, creating this office I think will be - will also help us provide leadership on more deliberate future research on climate monitoring and assessment and doing this all in a much more coordinated fashion along with - and also by responding to the needs of the private sector and other policymakers so that everyone's able to see exactly what NOAA does, what the Climate Service does and all in one roof, all in one place. And that can also identify what else needs to be done.

Coordinator: Thank you. The next question comes from (Debra Zamrinko) of (Reuters).

(Debra Zamrinko): Hi there all of you and thanks so much for having this call. For Secretary Locke, I was interested to hear you say in your opening statement that this is expected to open up some new private sector businesses based on government information just as you say, the National Weather Service has done. I wonder if you could expand a little bit on that.

And just if I can sneak in one extra little question while I'm talking. Not to put too fine a point on it, but in lots of other places in Washington such as the congress and such as EPA, they're concentrating it seems to me more on in climate (terms) what's called mitigation and stopping it from going further. And this looks like the adaptation piece. So I just want to be sure that that's - that I've got that right, that that's what this is. Thanks.

Gary Locke: Well I'll let Dr. Lubchenco talk a little bit more about that latter part but obviously policymakers need to have that wealth of information available to them and have to really understand what's happening in as comprehensive a fashion as possible and use that information by which they would make a policy determination, some policy decision, whether it's mitigation and so forth.

And that's - you know, that's what NOAA intends to do with this, much like as we do with the National Weather Service. And - but going back to your first point, you know, let's say you're in the ski resort business and you're a trade association involved in - or you're a ski resort operator. Do you expand or do you not expand? Where do you build more lifts? What's the anticipated weather patterns and the impact of the climate change on your particular ski resort at a certain elevation?

And, you know, should you - if you have several ski resorts maybe you don't want to expand or build upon it because maybe over the next several decades it's anticipated that that - what now falls as now at some of your lower elevations will, in fact, be rain and it may not make sense.

Now I'm sure that there'll be people who'll take all this information and private sector and start focusing just on ski resorts and providing that service and trying to consult and - to the members of the Ski Operator's Association, et cetera, et cetera.

And just as you have people from the - who take the information for the National Weather Service and focus on very specific issues relating to farmers or relating to people outside the warning areas of, let's say, tornados or hurricanes or things like that.

Jane Lubchenco: This is Jane Lubchenco. I think the intent for the NOAA Climate Service is that it will be helpful and useful for both mitigation and adaptation purposes. For both of those, having data and information and products about climate change are relevant and useful.

The - we see this provision of information as a nice compliment to many of the other activities that are underway focused on the specific measurements that might be involved in monitoring of greenhouse gases but the basic information is certainly relevant to both mitigation and adaptation.

Tom, do you want to add anything to that?

Tom Karl: Yes, I think, Dr. Lubchenco, you've explained it very nicely. And I would just give a concrete example. Adaptation has been doing on for a long time in this country, and an example of what NOAA's done in the past is just simple things like how deep should you expect to dig a foundation to be able to withstand the cold in the wintertime?

We've developed some air freezing index temperatures that have helped the building industry save on their own estimates on the order of \$300 million a year in terms of the building standards. But the issues now are not only adapting to past changes, how should we be thinking about climate in the next 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 100 years because the structures we build today are in place for many years?

And we want to do that most effectively. And there's a whole wealth of data and information that NOAA has available that can be used quite effectively in this regard.

Coordinator: Thank you. The next question comes from (Julia Iopren) of the Washington Post.

(Julia Iopren): Hi. Thanks. And this may be a question more for Tom Karl, although anyone who wants to answer it would be welcome. Getting back to the science, in terms of the precision in which modeling can now give a sense of what would be regional climate prediction -- since obviously that's a lot of what the service is aiming to do -- can I get some sense of, you know, kind of where you think the models are now as opposed to five or ten years ago both in terms of regionality and how many, you know, how much you can do in terms of short term predictions?

Tom Karl: Yes, in terms of the model's capabilities today, clearly because of the inquiry's computational power as well as the insights that we've been making with analyzing the models and looking at the observational data, we've had quite a bit more confidence in the models than we had in the past.

We're not where we want to be. We can't, for example, provide the kinds of important information that is being asked with respect to important events. And I'll give an example. This past wintertime situation, we're still trying to understand. We know we had a strong El Nino. We know that - I'm sorry, a moderate El Nino.

And we also had an unusual circumstance where we had what meteorologists like to call the Arctic Oscillation. It became quite intense this past winter. It rearranged the hemispheric circulation. And we don't exactly understand that today.

Now these are challenges for the future, but they're quite important in terms of trying to understand the regional aspects of what happens in any given winter and the probability of extreme events like the snowstorm we just saw recently in the East Coast.

Coordinator: Your next question comes from (Ben Gimmen) of (Sill) Newspaper.

(Ben Gimmen): Yes, thank you for holding the call. I just wanted to return back again to the extent to which congress does or does not have to approve this. Secretary, I think what you were mentioning was that you don't, of course, need some type of new authorizing legislation but there is a role here for the appropriators.

So would the shifting of the resources necessary come in the annual NOAA appropriations bill and wouldn't that then, of course, have to be approved by the entire congress?

Jane Lubchenco: Mr. Secretary?

Gary Locke: Oh, sorry about that. I had the mute button so you didn't hear any extraneous noises.

We would like to have this operational by the first of the fiscal year, the 2011 fiscal year and I think it makes it much cleaner and easier to move the money around for accounting purposes to have it done then. And so I just think it's all wrapped in one.

Coordinator: Thank you. Your next question comes from (Ann Thompson) of NBC News.

(Ann Thompson): Dr. Lubchenco, this question is for you. Can you hear me?

Jane Lubchenco: I can, thank you.

(Ann Thompson): I'm sorry. I can't hear myself. I apologize. Do you still have - I want to go back to the IPCC and the controversy. Do you still have confidence in the findings of the IPCC? And how do you explain to a public that's hearing that this group which is supposed to be the gold standard of climate science used an article to say that the Himalatian (sic) glaciers would disappear - or the Himalayan glaciers would disappear by 2035? How is anybody supposed to have confidence?

Jane Lubchenco: That's - the IPCC has recognized that that particular conclusion was in error and that the normal checks and balances that are in place to ensure that the findings of the IPCC are credible did not work perfectly and will be improved.

That said, I think that the vast majority of the conclusions in the IPCC are credible, are - have been through a very rigorous process and are absolutely state of science, state of the art in terms of what we know about the climate systems.

It is important to recognize that the IPCC has thousands and thousands of conclusions about specific changes in the climate system and that most of them have been shown to be quite reliable.

The situation with the Himalayan glaciers was unfortunate but it is quite atypical of the rest of the IPCC.

Justin Kenney: And operator, this is Justin Kenney. If we could have time for one more question please and then I can come back on and give my contact information for any reporters who didn't get a chance to ask a question. But if we could take one more please.

Coordinator: Thank you. The final question then comes from (Alexander Duncan) of Quest.

(Alexander Duncan): Hi everyone. Thanks for doing this call. I've got a bit of a two-parter. The first is which energy industries have come the most frequently to NOAA asking for this kind of information? And second of all, how do you anticipate - you touched briefly on this - how do you anticipate the different energy industries actually using this information whether it be wind patterns or water flow for rivers cooling power plants, that sort of thing?

Jane Lubchenco: Tom, do you want to take that?

Tom Karl: Yes, and I think it's a range of energy related industries that have actually come to NOAA. You mentioned the wind industry and the solar industry. Certainly they have been very much interested because their energy is totally dependent on the climate.

But the more traditional energy industries, for example, Duke Energy and many other companies who are providing energy on a day-to-day basis and an hour-to-hour basis are very much interested not only in the weather and the climate of the season into next year but what the future portends.

So I think it's a broad number of industries that have come and talk to us about what we're doing and what we may be able to do in the future.

Justin Kenney: Thank you operator and thank you again. This is Justin...

Jane Lubchenco: Justin, before we conclude - this is Jane. I'd like to clarify one question or a couple of questions that were focused on our interactions with congress.

I think - I would like to simply acknowledge how much we appreciate the strong support that congress continues to provide for developing Climate Services and note that Chairman Gordon, his Climate Service Bill, which is now included in the Waxman Markey Bill and the NOAA Climate Service authorization language that's in Senators Carey and Boxer's bill is I think indication of that strong interest.

So I would note that while the National Climate Program Office - I mean, I'm sorry - the National Climate Program Act provides NOAA with ample authority to move forward with its proposal to establish the new office that we're talking about, updated authorization that reflects the latest science and services approaches will ultimately be helpful.

So we have been consulting all along with congress on our plans and now that we have announced its intent, we fully expect over the next few months to do what we described earlier - prepare and submit a reprogramming package to OMB and to congress for their approval, but at the same time continue to work with and consult with all of the relevant committees and interest parties in congress.

Justin Kenney: Thank you Dr. Lubchenco. Again this is Justin Kenney. And thank you Mr. Secretary and Dr. Karl. To all of those joining, thank you very much for joining us today. Again, if you did not get a chance to ask your question or if you have additional questions, you can reach me today either at justin.kenney@noaa.gov or my cell phone is 202-821-6310.

And again I point out that all the supporting materials that were discussed today are available online at noaa.gov/climate, and to also while you're there check out the new climate portal at climate.gov.

And with that I want to thank everyone for joining us today. This conference call is adjourned.

Coordinator: Thank you for joining today's conference. You may disconnect at this time.

END